

**SECRET**

1 September 1964

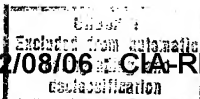
MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT:** Completion of MS/TR's Evaluation of Indications Capability of Traffic Analysis Based on Photography in North Vietnam and Laos

**REFERENCE:** Joint CIA/DIA Memorandum, Analysis of Truck Traffic on Selected Routes in North Vietnam and Laos, 29 July 1964, **SECRET**

1. North Vietnamese support to insurgency in South Vietnam and Laos is of priority concern to the US intelligence community. (ICID, No. 2, 3, PMIO's, Quarterly Supplement, 1 July 1964, Para 6, **SECRET**.) Therefore the degree of logistical assistance being provided to the insurgents is of continuing interest. It is also essential that a watch against changes in O/B be maintained, sufficiently sensitive to detect critical changes in intentions or capabilities.
2. Referenced memorandum concluded that analysis of high level photography (Lucky Dragon) over North Vietnam and Laos had provided:
  - a. Confirmation of the principal routes used for truck traffic.
  - b. The condition of the routes and the periods of time when they can be used for truck traffic.
  - c. A rough measure of the volume of truck traffic on specific routes.
  - d. A rough indication of the relative importance of the various routes.
3. It was concluded, too, that improvement of the reliability of the photography for traffic analysis required larger samples of the activity on these roads, based on more frequent coverage of a greater portion of the routes, together with more intensive exploitation by WPIC.

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**SECRET**

4. It was also noted that the 3 to 4 weeks required to process and exploit the Lucky Dragon film before it becomes available for traffic analysis, is so excessive as to seriously lessen the value of the product as an intelligence indicator.

5. Thus, while [ ] analysis of high level photography has provided useful intelligence on Communist insurgency in Laos and in North and South Vietnam, this technique, unless supported by more intensive collection and exploitation, is too imprecise an indicator to measure possible changes in the level of combat activity, and too tardy an indicator to satisfactorily perform a watch function. In this sense its role is almost historical. Responsible personnel in OMB, OGI, and DD/P have concurred in this evaluation and have stated that they have no urgent current need for further traffic analysis based on photography.

6. At the present time reliance for indications intelligence is therefore placed principally on the low level Yankee Team photography, processed in the field and exploited primarily for O/B intelligence. Although not amenable to analysis for variations in traffic density, this source can more quickly measure changes in capability with less coverage and less exploitation than can traffic analysis based on high level photography. While somewhat more hazardous, the low level operations are probably less affected by seasonal weather variations. Also, low level photography is supplemented by the [ ] project now undergoing evaluation.

7. On August 14 DIA requested that the national requirement for the exploitation by NPIC of high level photography in support of traffic analysis of Communist logistical activities in North Vietnam and Laos be regarded as fulfilled and [ ] concurred in the DIA action. This decision is accepted pending USIB action on the referenced memorandum. It is understood, of course, that termination of exploitation of the high level photography by NPIC also terminates OMB's responsibility to analyze the traffic which might have been disclosed by such photography. Therefore, pending further USIB action, MS/IR's evaluation of the indications capability of traffic analysis based on photography in North Vietnam and Laos is regarded as complete.

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